

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 20, 1860.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. SAULSBURY made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 98.]

*The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill for the relief of Mrs. Olivia W. Cannon, widow of Joseph S. Cannon, deceased, late a midshipman in the United States Navy, praying an extension of her pension, heretofore granted by Congress for the period of five years for life or widowhood, beg leave to report:*

That it appears by the testimony accompanying the petition, and the following report, made at the last Congress, that the application of the petitioner is worthy of the favorable consideration of Congress; and the committee therefore report back the bill for her relief submitted in this case, with a recommendation that it do pass.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 15, 1856.

*The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the memorial of Mrs. Olivia W. Cannon, widow of the late Midshipman Joseph S. Cannon, deceased, report:*

It appears by evidence on file in the Pension Office, in connection with the papers upon which the late Midshipman Joseph S. Cannon was pensioned, that said Joseph S. Cannon was appointed midshipman on the 26th February, 1814, and commissioned by President Madison. Immediately upon receiving his commission, he was ordered to report himself for duty to the commandant of the naval station at Vergennes, Vermont, on Lake Champlain. He accordingly repaired at once to his post and entered upon active duty. On the 11th September, 1814, Midshipman Cannon became a participant in that memorable victory on Lake Champlain, under Commodore McDonough. For the gallant conduct he displayed on that occasion he, in common with other officers who also won for the American navy imperishable renown in that conflict, was voted a sword by Congress. This highly flattering testimonial was presented by the Navy Department, in appropriate terms, as will be seen by papers accompanying the memorial of his widow, who appeals for a pension, by virtue of her deceased husband's services.

In addition to the presentation of a sword by Congress, the illustrious McDonough, under date of January 1, 1818, pays the following tribute to Midshipman Cannon: "I take great pleasure in testifying that the conduct of Midshipman Cannon, while under my command, and in action on Lake Champlain, on the 11th September, 1814, was that of the officer, seaman, and gentleman, and he well deserves the praise and attention of his government."

In 1817, Midshipman Cannon received orders to report himself on board of the schooner *Asp*, at Baltimore, Maryland, which vessel was about to sail for an expedition in surveying the southern coast. To this order he responded with the same alacrity displayed by him on former occasions, and, for upwards of seventeen months, amidst the most arduous duties consequent upon a faithful performance of the important task before himself and brother officers, Midshipman Cannon continued to labor with great assiduity in a climate to which his system was entirely unaccustomed. He underwent exposures by night and by day, the effect of which resulted in a deep-seated pulmonary disease, and from which, ultimately, he found an untimely death.

Shortly after Mr. Cannon's return with the remnant of his fellow officers of the surveying expedition, for it may be remarked that but two others, besides himself, survived the hardships of the service and ravages of the climate to which they were exposed, he applied for orders to rendezvous at the Philadelphia naval station, at which place, being near his home, he hoped to be able to recruit his impaired health, at the same time discharge such duties as the nature of his position on shore might demand. Unfortunately his request could not be granted, because there was no vacancy at that station at the time. Subsequently he was ordered to report himself for duty on various occasions and at various posts, but owing to continued and *increasing* ill health he was unable to respond to said orders, and was compelled, from time to time, to ask to be furloughed. To some of his requests the department assented, to others *dissented*. Not being able, therefore, for the reasons before stated, to meet the requirements of the department, Mr. Cannon was subjected to the operations of what seems to have been a very stringent and oppressive rule, and was consequently forced out of the service by dismissal; thereby deprived of all pay whatsoever, and with no other dependence for the support of himself and household than the charities of the world.

As evidence to show that Midshipman Cannon was unable to enter upon active duty after his return from the southern coast survey, Surgeon Harris, of the navy, now surgeon general, testifies, under date of March, 1828, that "such is his (Midshipman Cannon's) condition, that he is not able to attend to public or private duty;" and under date of August 30, 1827, Surgeon Harris says: "Midshipman Cannon has been seriously ill for several years with pulmonary affection, and I am of opinion that he is entirely incapable, with his present health, of attending to duty as an officer."

Midshipman Cannon was himself pensioned under a special act of Congress, but unfortunately survived but a short time to enjoy it.

Your committee herewith report a bill granting the petitioner five years' half pay, and recommend its passage.